## <u>Testimony of Dr. Maureen Brummett, Superintendent of Plainville Community</u> Schools

Good Afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to speak to the Appropriations Committee. My name is Dr. Maureen Brummett and I have been an educator for over 30 years. I have held the position of Superintendent of Schools in Plainville for 10 months. Prior to that I was Assistant Superintendent and the Director of Special Education.

I truly believe the past 10 months have been unprecedented in terms of educational funding. Two months after I was appointed superintendent and a month after Plainville's operating budget was overwhelmingly approved via our referendum process, we were notified of over \$175,000 in cuts to our ECS and Transportation grants. In September, after all staff was already in place, the State Dept. of Ed notified us of a \$100,000 cut to our Open Choice grant. We are a district that has been a big supporter of the Choice program and currently have 118 Open Choice students, which is close to 5% of our total school enrollment. Then in January 2017, we were notified of additional ECS cuts to Plainville of \$95,000. These funding sources have been reliable contributors to our school district (and many others) for at least the last 15 years.

In spite of these stunning cuts, nothing could have prepared me, my Director of Finance, the Board of Education, Town Council, Town Manager, and my Superintendent colleagues across the state for Gov. Malloy's announcement last Wednesday. When my Town Manager, Robert Lee, completed his analysis, I was horrified to learn that Plainville would lose close to 1 million dollars in state aid for next year as a result of ECS and other grant reductions and the requirement that towns now must pay 1/3 of the contribution for the Teachers' Retirement fund.

Let me be very clear. If this budget proposal is not significantly modified Plainville students and most of their counterparts throughout the state will lose educational services. One proposed solution we have discussed in Plainville is to cut our operating budget (currently at a 1.95% increase, which is already lean, with no new position merely a continuation of programs given current contractual increases, and a reduction of 2 teachers and 2 tutors) to a 0% increase. If our government officials endorse this, I will have no choice, but to reduce teaching and support staff positions. Conservatively, I anticipate the need to eliminate summer school programs for our most at risk learners (\$50,000), at least 6 certified teachers (300,000), and at least 10 tutors and paras (\$250,000). This will reduce instructional support services for our students most in need, increase class sizes, and reduce course options at our high school. This will also damage morale, as teachers who remain will have more to do with less support, and put 20 staff members into the unemployment line.

The Governor's budget proposal is terrible for our students, and whatever benefits our needlest districts receive, will be at the peril of all the other students in the state. Please do not support this proposal, the ramifications will be felt by our students for many years to come. Thank you.